IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please substitute the following paragraphs for the paragraphs currently in the specification, as indicated below.

Page 1, last paragraph, continuing to page 2, first partial paragraph:

A drawback of the prior art cages is that a variety of different cage sizes, necessary to support the different rodent types, must be inventoried and managed so that the appropriate cage size is available for a particular study. For example, the standard rat cage used in the art has a 140 square inch footprint providing for housing of up to three rats in each cage. On the other hand, the standard size for a mouse cage has become 75 square inches allowing up to five mice of 25 grams each to be housed therein. Rat cages are also taller than mice cages and therefore the wire bar lid holding food and water is higher from the ground in rat cages than mice cages, therefore one cannot readily house mice in the standard rat cage. This problem is exacerbated in large research facilities, for example, the National Institute of Health (NIH), where 20 to 30 different cage sizes have to be coordinated. Furthermore, each different cage size requires that the corresponding rack that supports the particular cage size and corresponding accessories be used. This forces the facility to inventory and manage a variety of different rack sizes as well.

Page 4, last paragraph, continuing to page 5, first partial paragraph:

Referring now to FIGS. 1-6, there is shown a cage level barrier rat cage 1 constructed in accordance with the present invention. As used herein, the term "cage level barrier rodent cage" means a cage having walls and floor that collectively form a barrier at the cage level protecting

both lab personnel and the animals contained within the cage from contamination. Rat cage 1 includes a cage bottom 3 having four integral side walls 12 and a floor 13. Cage bottom 3 also includes an open top end 16. Extending continuously around top end 16 of cage bottom 3 is a peripheral lip 8 having a smooth and flat surface. A rim 4 vertically descends from peripheral lip 8. A pair of recesses 35, 35' are formed in peripheral lip 8. In an exemplary embodiment, recess 35 is disposed in the portion of peripheral lip 8 adjacent a corner of cage bottom 3 while recess 35' is disposed in the portion of peripheral lip 8 that is opposite recess 35.

Page 5, first complete paragraph:

Although cage bottom 3 may be constructed from any suitable material, it is preferable that it be molded from transparent plastic so that the rat contained in cage bottom 3 can be monitored through side walls 12. Also, it is preferred that cage bottom 3 have rounded corners thereby preventing the rats from chewing on the corners and gnawing their way out of cage 1.

Page 12, last paragraph, continuing to page 13, first partial paragraph:

A plurality of rat cages 1 may be positioned within rack 212. Each cage is positioned within rack 212 by a canopy, generally indicated at 230. Each canopy 230 shrouds a cage 1 below a canopy 230. Accordingly, each canopy 230 is shaped and positioned so as to substantially surround the top 9 of the cage 1b while maintaining a short gap h between top 9 and canopy 230. Perforations 243 are positioned adjacent each of canopies 230. Gap h should be sufficient to allow movement of gases between canopy 230 and top 9, and top 9, and in an exemplary embodiment gap h is 3/16 of an inch to ¼ of an inch. Canopy 230 profiles bonnet 14,

preferably creating a tension fit against the sidewall of bottom 3 of cage 1b. The rear of canopy 230 contacts air exhaust plenum 242.

Page 14, second paragraph, continuing to page 15, first partial paragraph:

In a preferred embodiment, the rack 212 has a width W of 86.25 inches, a depth D of 32.5 inches and a height H of 79.875 inches. A limitation on the rack is that it should fit through a standard door. To achieve this result, height of the rack can be no greater than 80 inches and the depth of the rack with cages stacked on either side, if a dual sided rack, can be no greater than 36 inches. In a preferred embodiment, rack 212 supports one hundred and twelve cages 1. Because the cages have a floor space of between 80 inches and 140 inches, they hold a minimum of two rats per cage for a total of two hundred twenty four rats between 300 and 400 grams each. Alternatively, at least five mice of up to 25 grams can be housed per cage yielding five hundred sixty mice for the entire rack. This is in comparison with prior art rat units which had a width of 85.063 inches, a depth of 26.375 inches and a height of 65.062 inches and which housed only thirty-six 140 square inch cages. Placing three rats into each of the prior art cages yielded one hundred and eight rats. Accordingly, the number of rats housed in the present rack is an increase of 107% over the number of rats housed in prior units without a corresponding increase in rack footprint. At the same time, the reduction in the number of mice housed in a rat cage of the type disclosed herein as compared to the rack specifically designed for mice is a reduction of less than 20%. Accordingly, the efficiency of the overall rack system for housing both mice and rats is increased.

Page 16, last partial paragraph, continuing to page 17, first partial paragraph:

The durability and reliability of cage 1 of the present invention is also improved. Also, rounded lip 17, extending from feeder assembly 23, which is received by receiving portion 19 of top 9, prevents rats from perching and accessing food in feeder assembly 23 from above. In addition, radiusing supports 52, 52' of feeder 23 eliminates purchase points on the feeder. Furthermore, by mounting either water bottle support 31 or food holder 37, both made of stainless steel, to the bottom of supports 52, 52' of feeder assembly 23, the rats are prevented from gnawing through the bottom of feeder assembly 23. Also, by forming top 9 from stainless steel, or radiusing passages 62 in plastic the rats will be unable to gnaw through bonnet 14. Finally, by including lock 43 on bonnet 14, the rats housed in cage bottom 3 will be unable to displace bonnet 14 and escape.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 4 and 5 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please add new claims 7 and 8, as provided below.

8. A cage level barrier cage ventilated rack and cage system for housing a plurality of types of rodents including a plurality of mice or rats within a cage, the system comprising:

a double sided rack, the rack having a depth; and

a cage disposed in said rack, said cage having a cage bottom, the cage bottom having a plurality of integral side walls, a floor and an open top, and the length of the cage being less than substantially a 18 inches;